

1. An Internet-based method of communicating with a plurality of members, each member having a computer-based communications system with an e-mail facility adapted to be coupled to said Internet, the Internet-based method comprising the steps of:

providing a web-based user interface for data input for said plurality of members, said user interface accepting member data representing characteristics of said members, said member data at least including communications data, which includes a respective e-mail address for each member, and at least one of demographic data and personal data regarding each said member;

organizing said member data into a data structure;

creating an e-mail communication;

embedding in said e-mail communication a hyperlink to a first web site and a referral communications data packet associated with said hyperlink such that, upon actuation of said hyperlink, said referral data packet is adapted to be sent to a second web site, said referral data packet including one or more data elements from the group including sponsor data, recipient member data, e-mail campaign data, and member action data;

preparing a listing of members from said data structure based upon criteria encompassed by said member data;

broadcasting said e-mail communication to members based upon said listing;

reporting the receipt of said referral communications data packet.

2. A method as claimed in claim 1 wherein the step of embedding utilizes a referral data packet having at least two data elements from the group including sponsor data, recipient member data, e-mail campaign data, and member action data.

3. A method as claimed in claim 1 wherein said reporting includes the step of extracting, from said referral data packet, said one or more data elements from the group including sponsor data, recipient member data, e-mail campaign data, and member action data, and wherein the method includes the step of adding said one or more data elements to said data structure in order to determine the response of said members to the broadcast e-mail communication.

4. A method as claimed in claim 3 wherein the reporting step occurs either at said second web site or at a third web site, and the method includes accepting, from said third web site, the reporting of said receipt of said referral communications data packet.

5. A method as claimed in claim 1 wherein the step of providing a user interface includes enabling input by each respective member to classify himself or herself with demographic data thereby associating said member with one or more groups of members, and enabling input by each respective member to input personal data distinguishing said member from said plurality of members.

6. A method as claimed in claim 1 including the step of maintaining a copy of all e-mail communications sent to each member and including the step of enabling output of all said e-mail communications to each respective member to view his or her own e-mail communications.

7. A method as claimed in claim 2 wherein the step of embedding utilizes a referral communications data packet having the following data elements: sponsor data, recipient member data, and e-mail campaign data.

8. A method as claimed in claim 1 wherein the step of creating said e-mail communications includes the step of creating a member selectable list of choices and includes the step of associating the selected choice in said member action data.

9. A method as claimed in claim 1 including the step of permitting each respective member to edit his or her own member data via said user interface.

10. A method as claimed in claim 1 including the step of confirming said e-mail address for respective members by (a) sending a test e-mail addressed to said respective member and (b) confirming said e-mail address based upon an absence of a response from the e-mail addressee.

11. A method as claimed in claim 1 including the steps of sorting through said member data and selecting a sub-plurality based upon further criteria encompassed by said member data, and randomly selecting one or more members from said sub-plurality as winning members, notifying said winning members via a winner notification e-mail communication and publicly posting information relative to said winning member or members on said Internet.

12. A method as claimed in claim 11 including recording winning member data as apart of said member data and including the step of excluding winning members from said random selection step for a pre-programmed period of time after winner notification.

13. A method as claimed in claim 1 wherein the step of creating an e-mail communication includes incorporating preexisting material into said e-mail communication.

14. A method as claimed in claim 1 wherein the step of embedding utilizes a referral communications data packet having the following data elements: sponsor data, recipient member data, and e-mail campaign data.

15. A method as claimed in claim 14 wherein said reporting includes the step of extracting, from said referral data packet, said data elements and wherein the method includes the step of adding said data elements to said data structure in order to determine the response of said members to the broadcast e-mail communication.

16. A method as claimed in claim 15 wherein the reporting step occurs either at said second web site or at a third web site, and the method includes accepting, from said third web site, the reporting of said receipt of said referral communications data packet.

17. A method as claimed in claim 16 wherein the step of providing a user interface includes enabling input by each respective member to classify himself or herself with demographic data thereby associating said member with one or more groups of members, and enabling input by each respective member to input personal data distinguishing said member from said plurality of members.

18. A method as claimed in claim 17 wherein the step of creating said e-mail communications includes the step of creating a member selectable list of choices and includes the step of associating the selected choice in said member action data.

19. A method as claimed in claim 18 including the step of permitting each respective member to edit his or her own member data via said user interface.

20. A method as claimed in claim 19 including the step of confirming said e-mail address for respective members by (a) sending a test e-mail addressed to said respective member and (b) confirming said e-mail address based upon an absence of a response from the e-mail addressee.

21. A method as claimed in claim 20 wherein the step of creating an e-mail communication includes incorporating preexisting material into said e-mail communication.

22. A method as claimed in claim 21 including the steps of sorting through said member data and selecting a sub-plurality based upon further criteria encompassed by said member data, and randomly selecting one or more members from said sub-plurality as winning members, notifying said

winning members via a winner notification e-mail communication and publicly posting information relative to said winning member or members on said Internet.

23. A method as claimed in claim 22 including recording winning member data as apart of said member data and including the step of excluding winning members from said random selection step for a pre-programmed period of time after winner notification.

24. A multi-modal method of communicating of communicating with a plurality of members, each member having at least one computer-based communications system with an e-mail facility adapted to be coupled to the Internet, and some members having respective pagers, cellular telephones and land-line telephones coupled via telecommunications networks to said Internet, the multi-modal method of communicating comprising the steps of:

providing an interface for data input relating to said plurality of members, said interface accepting member data representing characteristics of said members, said member data at least including communications data, which includes a respective e-mail address for each member and, for said some members, includes a respective pager, cellular telephone number and land-line telephone number, if available for said some members;

organizing said member data into a data structure;

creating an e-mail communication;

embedding in said e-mail communication a hyperlink to a first web site and a referral communications data packet associated with said hyperlink such that, upon actuation of said hyperlink, said referral data packet is adapted to be sent to a second web site, said referral data packet including at least recipient member data and e-mail campaign data;

broadcasting said e-mail communication to said plurality of members;

reporting the receipt of said referral communications data packet and logging the same into said data structure;

in the event that some members are non-responsive to said e-mail communications noted by an absence of receipt data in said data structure,

creating a digital version of an audio communication, said audio communication adapted to be presented over said cellular telephones and land-line telephones to non-responsive members who have respective cellular telephones or land-line telephones;

for said some members who are non-responsive and have respective pagers, creating a paging message representing a request for a response, said paging message adapted to be presented via said respective pagers;

broadcasting said digital version of said audio message and said paging message via said Internet and said telecommunications networks to said non-responsive members;

providing a further interface for responsive data input from said non-responsive members; and,

logging response data into said data structure.

25. A method as claimed in claim 24 including providing a plurality of web sites, each web site characterized as having a different priority, said members classified according to priority levels, each member priority level associated with a corresponding web site priority, said member data including member priority level data; with respect to the step of embedding, said first web site is defined as the plurality of prioritized web sites, the step of embedding including the step of

placing prioritized web site hyperlinks into each e-mail communication corresponding to the member priority level data.

26. A method as claimed in claim 24 wherein said member data includes personal data regarding each member and wherein the step of providing an interface for data input includes the step of permitting each respective member to edit his or her own member data.

27. A method as claimed in claim 25 including the step of preparing a listing of members from said data structure based upon criteria encompassed by said member data and the step of broadcasting includes the step of broadcasting based upon said listing.

28. A method as claimed in claim 24 wherein the step of providing an interface for data input includes a web-based interface for data input relating to said plurality of members.

29. A method as claimed in claim 25 wherein said different priority web sites represent different levels of information for an emergency response team, said plurality of members being part of said emergency response team, said step of creating an e-mail communication includes the step of inputting current data representing an emergency and said step of broadcasting representing a step of mobilizing said emergency response team.

30. A method as claimed in claim 25 wherein said referral communications data packet includes member action data as a data element, and said step of creating said e-mail communications includes the step of creating a member selectable list of choices in said e-mail communication and includes the step of associating the selected choice in said member action data.

31. A method as claimed in claim 24 wherein said reporting includes the step of extracting, from said referral data packet, said recipient member data and e-mail campaign data, and

wherein the method includes the step of adding said data elements to said data structure in order to determine the response of said members to the broadcast e-mail communication.

32. A method as claimed in claim 31 wherein the reporting step occurs either at said second web site or at a third web site, and the method includes accepting, from said third web site, the reporting of said receipt of said referral communications data packet.

33. A method as claimed in claim 24 including the step of maintaining a copy of all e-mail communications sent to each member and including the step of enabling output of all said e-mail communications to each respective member to view his or her own e-mail communications.

34. A method as claimed in claim 25 wherein said member data includes personal data regarding each member and wherein the step of providing an interface for data input includes the step of permitting each respective member to edit his or her own member data.

35. A method as claimed in claim 34 including the step of preparing a listing of members from said data structure based upon criteria encompassed by said member data and the step of broadcasting includes the step of broadcasting based upon said listing.

36. A method as claimed in claim 35 wherein the step of providing an interface for data input includes a web-based interface for data input relating to said plurality of members.

37. A method as claimed in claim 36 wherein said referral communications data packet includes member action data as a data element, and said step of creating said e-mail communications includes the step of creating a member selectable list of choices in said e-mail communication and includes the step of associating the selected choice in said member action data.

38. A method as claimed in claim 37 wherein said reporting includes the step of extracting, from said referral data packet, said recipient member data and e-mail campaign data, and

wherein the method includes the step of adding said data elements to said data structure in order to determine the response of said members to the broadcast e-mail communication.

39. A method as claimed in claim 38 wherein said different priority web sites represent different levels of information for an emergency response team, said plurality of members being part of said emergency response team, said step of creating an e-mail communication includes the step of inputting current data representing an emergency and said step of broadcasting representing a step of mobilizing said emergency response team.

40. A method of monitoring the effect of broadcast e-mail communications over the Internet to a plurality of members, each member having a computer-based communications system with an e-mail facility and an associated e-mail address adapted to be coupled to said Internet, the method comprising the steps of:

creating an e-mail communication;

embedding in said e-mail communication a hyperlink to a first web site and a referral communications data packet associated with said hyperlink such that, upon actuation of said hyperlink, said referral data packet is adapted to be sent to a second web site, said referral data packet including one or more data elements from the group including sponsor data, recipient member data, e-mail campaign data, and member action data;

sending said e-mail communication to one or more select members.

41. A computer-readable storage medium containing computer executable code for instructing a computer to establish an Internet-based method of communicating with a plurality of members, each member having a computer-based communications system with an e-mail facility adapted to be coupled to said Internet, the code instructing the computer to operate as follows:

providing a user interface for data input for said plurality of members, said user interface accepting member data representing characteristics of said members, said member data at least including communications data, which includes a respective e-mail address for each member;

organizing said member data into a data structure;

creating an e-mail communication;

embedding in said e-mail communication a hyperlink to a first web site and a referral communications data packet associated with said hyperlink such that, upon actuation of said hyperlink, said referral data packet is adapted to be sent to a second web site, said referral data packet including one or more data elements from the group including sponsor data, addressor data, addressee data, and e-mail campaign data;

preparing a listing of members from said data structure;

broadcasting said e-mail communication to members based upon said listing;

reporting the receipt of said referral communications data packet.

42. A computer-readable storage medium containing computer executable code for instructing a computer to establish an Internet-based method of communicating with a plurality of members, each member having a computer-based communications system with an e-mail facility adapted to be coupled to said Internet, the code instructing the computer to operate as follows:

providing a user interface for data input for said plurality of members, said user interface accepting member data representing characteristics of said members, said member data at least including communications data, which includes a respective e-mail address for each member, and at least one of demographic data and personal data regarding each said member;

organizing said member data into a data structure;

creating an e-mail communication;

embedding in said e-mail communication a hyperlink to a first web site and a referral communications data packet associated with said hyperlink such that, upon actuation of said hyperlink, said referral data packet is adapted to be sent to a second web site, said referral data packet including one or more data elements from the group including sponsor data, recipient member data, e-mail campaign data, and member action data;

preparing a listing of members from said data structure based upon criteria encompassed by said member data;

broadcasting said e-mail communication to members based upon said listing;

reporting the receipt of said referral communications data packet.

43. A computer-readable storage medium containing computer executable code as claimed in claim 42 for instructing a computer to operate by wherein the operation of embedding utilizes a referral communications data packet having the following data elements: sponsor data, recipient member data, and e-mail campaign data.

44. A computer-readable storage medium containing computer executable code as claimed in claim 43 for instructing a computer to operate wherein the reporting includes extracting, from said referral data packet, said data elements and wherein the operation includes adding said data elements to said data structure in order to determine the response of said members to the broadcast e-mail communication.

45. A computer-readable storage medium containing computer executable code as claimed in claim 44 for instructing a computer to operate wherein the reporting occurs either at said

second web site or at a third web site, and operation accepts, from said third web site, the reporting of said receipt of said referral communications data packet.

46. A computer-readable storage medium containing computer executable code as claimed in claim 45 for instructing a computer to operate wherein the user interface includes enables input by each respective member to classify himself or herself with demographic data thereby associating said member with one or more groups of members, and enables input by each respective member to input personal data distinguishing said member from said plurality of members.

47. A computer-readable storage medium containing computer executable code as claimed in claim 46 for instructing a computer to operate wherein the creation of said e-mail communications includes creating a member selectable list of choices and includes associating the selected choice in said member action data.

48. A computer-readable storage medium containing computer executable code as claimed in claim 47 for instructing a computer to operate including permitting each respective member to edit his or her own member data via said user interface.

49. A computer-readable storage medium containing computer executable code as claimed in claim 48 for instructing a computer to operate including confirming said e-mail address for respective members by (a) sending a test e-mail addressed to said respective member and (b) confirming said e-mail address based upon an absence of a response from the e-mail addressee.

50. A computer-readable storage medium containing computer executable code as claimed in claim 49 for instructing a computer to operate wherein the creation of said e-mail communication includes incorporating preexisting material into said e-mail communication.

09765011 050701

51. A computer-readable storage medium containing computer executable code as claimed in claim 50 for instructing a computer to operate including sorting through said member data and selecting a sub-plurality based upon further criteria encompassed by said member data, and randomly selecting one or more members from said sub-plurality as winning members, notifying said winning members via a winner notification e-mail communication and publicly posting information relative to said winning member or members on said Internet.

52. A computer-readable storage medium containing computer executable code as claimed in claim 51 for instructing a computer to operate including recording winning member data as apart of said member data and including excluding winning members from said random selection step for a pre-programmed period of time after winner notification.

53.
52. A computer-readable storage medium containing computer executable code for instructing a computer to establish a multi-modal method of communicating of communicating with a plurality of members, each member having at least one computer-based communications system with an e-mail facility adapted to be coupled to the Internet, and some members having respective pagers, cellular telephones and land-line telephones coupled via telecommunications networks to said Internet, the code instructing the computer to operate as follows:

providing an interface for data input relating to said plurality of members, said interface accepting member data representing characteristics of said members, said member data at least including communications data, which includes a respective e-mail address for each member and, for said some members, includes a respective pager, cellular telephone number and land-line telephone number, if available for said some members;

organizing said member data into a data structure;

creating an e-mail communication;

embedding in said e-mail communication a hyperlink to a first web site and a referral communications data packet associated with said hyperlink such that, upon actuation of said hyperlink, said referral data packet is adapted to be sent to a second web site, said referral data packet including at least recipient member data and e-mail campaign data;

broadcasting said e-mail communication to said plurality of members;

reporting the receipt of said referral communications data packet and logging the same into said data structure;

in the event that some members are non-responsive to said e-mail communications noted by an absence of receipt data in said data structure,

creating a digital version of an audio communication, said audio communication adapted to be presented over said cellular telephones and land-line telephones to non-responsive members who have respective a cellular telephone or land-line telephone;

for said some members who are non-responsive and have respective pagers, creating a paging message representing a request for a response, said paging message adapted to be presented via said respective pager to non-responsive members who have respective pagers;

broadcasting said digital version of said audio message and said paging message via said Internet and said telecommunications networks to said non-responsive members;

providing a further interface for responsive data input from said non-responsive members;
and,

logging response data into said data structure.

R1.126

54.
53.

A computer-readable storage medium containing computer executable code as claimed in claim 52 for instructing a computer to operate including providing a plurality of web sites, each web site characterized as having a different priority, said members classified according to priority levels, each member priority level associated with a corresponding web site priority, said member data including member priority level data; with respect to the step of embedding, said first web site is defined as the plurality of prioritized web sites; the operation of embedding including placing prioritized web site hyperlinks into each e-mail communication corresponding to the member priority level data.

R1.126

55.
54.

A computer-readable storage medium containing computer executable code as claimed in claim ⁵⁴53 for instructing a computer to operate wherein said member data includes personal data regarding each member and wherein the operation of providing an interface for data input includes permitting each respective member to edit his or her own member data.

R1.126

56.
55.

A computer-readable storage medium containing computer executable code as claimed in claim ⁵⁵54 for instructing a computer to operate including preparing a listing of members from said data structure based upon criteria encompassed by said member data and broadcasting based upon said listing.

R1.126

57.
56.

A computer-readable storage medium containing computer executable code as claimed in claim ⁵⁶55 for instructing a computer to operate wherein providing an interface for data input includes providing a web-based interface for data input relating to said plurality of members.

R1.126

58.
57.

A computer-readable storage medium containing computer executable code as claimed in claim ⁵⁷56 for instructing a computer to operate wherein said referral communications data packet includes member action data as a data element, and wherein the creation of said e-mail

communications includes creating a member selectable list of choices in said e-mail communication and includes associating the selected choice in said member action data.

21.126

⁵⁹
~~58.~~

A computer-readable storage medium containing computer executable code as claimed in claim ⁵⁸~~57~~ for instructing a computer to operate wherein said reporting includes extracting, from said referral data packet, said recipient member data and e-mail campaign data, and wherein the operation includes adding said data elements to said data structure in order to determine the response of said members to the broadcast e-mail communication.

21.126

⁶⁰
~~59.~~

A computer-readable storage medium containing computer executable code as claimed in claim ⁵⁹~~58~~ for instructing a computer to operate wherein said different priority web sites represent different levels of information for an emergency response team, said plurality of members being part of said emergency response team, said step of creating an e-mail communication includes the step of inputting current data representing an emergency and said step of broadcasting representing a step of mobilizing said emergency response team.

09765011-050701